

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided in the present application. Claims 2-13, 15-18, 20-36 and 38-48 are currently pending in the instant application. No claims have been amended by way of this response. Claims 2, 5, 18, 21, 29, 38 and 48 are independent. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter. Specifically, claims 2-4, 9-13, 16, 17, 20-23, 29-36 and 48 have been allowed. In addition, claims 6-8, 15, 24-28 and 42-47 have been objected to, but would be allowed if rewritten in independent format. Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have submitted a terminal disclaimer as an attachment to this response. Accordingly, the rejection to claims 5, 18 and 38-41 has been obviated and/or rendered moot. Accordingly, all of the claims of the present application should be allowed and the present application should be passed to Issue.

Drawings

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's approval of the formal drawings filed on December 22, 2003. Accordingly, no further action is required with respect to the drawings of the present application.

Double Patenting

Claims 5, 18 and 38-41 have been provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 5, 13 and 25-28 of copending application no. 09/994,047. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's alleged obviousness-type double patenting rejection, but merely to expedite the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have filed a terminal disclaimer concurrently herewith as an attachment to this Amendment. Accordingly, the rejection based upon U.S. Patent Application No. 09/994,047 should be withdrawn and the present application should be passed to Issue.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew T. Shanley, Registration No. 47,074 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Docket No. 0011-0366P

Appl. No. 09/816,321

Art Unit: 1734

Response After Final dated June 14, 2004

Reply to Office Action dated March 12, 2004

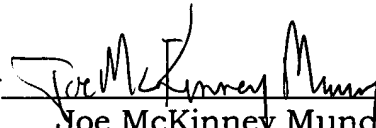
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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